

Diversity and Conservation Status of Socio-Religious Angiosperms of Amroha District of Rohilkhand Region(U.P.), India

Shiv Pratap Singh¹, Beena Kumari¹ and K. K. Singh²

¹Department of Botany, Hindu college,
Moradabad (U.P.), India

²School of Agricultural Science, Career Point University,
Kota (Rajasthan), India

Abstract

Amroha district came into existence on 15/4/1997 and its geographical area is 2470 Sq. Km. extending from Latitude 28° 54' North to 39° 6' North and Longitude 78° 28' East to 78° 39' East. The present study provides the information regarding the socio-religious importance of Angiosperms in Amroha District of Uttar Pradesh. The rural areas and forest patches of Amroha district were surveyed and covered extensively to record the socio-religious plant species. During the survey 53 species (dicot 41 and monocot 12) of angiosperms under 33 families have been recorded which are being used by the local people in various social and religious customs like marriage, worshiping, child birth, festivals and cremation. Poaceae family is dominating with 6 species followed by Papilionaceae with 5 and Euphorbiaceae, Moraceae and Lamiaceae with 3 species each. *Abrus precatorius* L. is rarely seen in two villages, *Nelumbo nucifera* Gearn in few private ponds, *Bambusa vulgaris* Schrad., *Butea monosperma*(Lam.) Taub., *Prosopis cineraria* (L.) Druce, *Polyalthia longifolia*(Sonn.) Thwaites. And *Saraca indica*L. are important trees which seen in private gardens only. During the survey done by us and by the discussion with local villagers it has been concluded that due to modernization and escapism there has been decrease in the conservation and traditional importance (utility) of religious plants. Data clearly indicate that whole plant (25%) is used maximum followed by flowers (22%), leaves (14%) and seeds (12%). Other parts are used less than 10%. Rural people treat these plants like socio-religious entity and worship them. Unfortunately, there is no written proof and information is available regarding the uses of those plants in Amroha district. It is hoped that the

present study may be useful to mankind. It will also inspire to conserve these plant species wherever possible.

Keywords: Angiosperms, social and religious customs, Rohilkhand region.

1. Introduction

District Amroha lies in north-western Uttar Pradesh state in northern India, located North West of Moradabad, near the Sot River. The district came into being on 24th April 1997 in the memory of famous social reformer St. Mahatama Jyotiba Phule by combining 6 blocks namely Gangeshwari, Hasanpur, Amroha, Joya, Gazrola, Dhanora and 3 Tehsils Amroha, Dhanora&Hasanpur vide UP Gazette no. 1071/1-5-97/224/sa-5 dated 15/4/1997 whose head office is situated in the ancient city Amroha. Its geographical area is 2470 Sq. Km. Extending from Latitude 28° 54' North to 39° 6' North and Longitude 78° 28' East to 78° 39' East. The maximum & minimum height from sea level is 240ft. & 177ft. respectively. The district encompasses many plant species which are being used as food, shelter, clothing and medicines by the people of village communities. Besides these, some plants are used by the people in different social and religious customs, are known as Socio-religious plants. Many festivals are associated with the significance of plants in India (Anthwalet *et al.*, 2006; Kumar, 2009; Ahirwar, 2013; Humeeraet *et al.*, 2014). Our cultural or religious activities has served the purpose of conserving our traditional heritage since the time of Vedas and Puranas (Gogoi and Borthakur, 1991; Dashoraet *et al.*, 2010; Singh *et al.*, 2012). During the survey done by us and by the discussion with local villagers it has been concluded that due to modernization and escapism there has been

decrease in the conservation and traditional importance (utility) of religious plants. Unfortunately, there is no written proof and information is available regarding the uses of those plants in J. P. Nagar district. An attempt has been made to record the socio-religious role of plants in J. P. Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh.

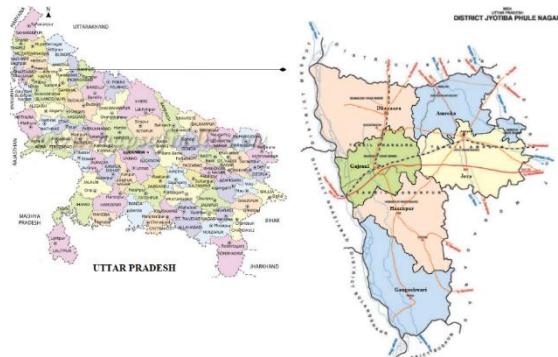


Fig 1: Map of J. P. Nagar (Amroha) District

2. Material and Method

The present study was carried out among the rural people inhabiting in J. P. Nagar (Amroha) district during the years 2016. The information regarding the utility of different plants in different religious and socio-cultural activities was collected by questionnaire, interviews and discussion among local religious headman and from elderly villagers in their local language. The survey area map is given in Fig-1. All of the plants were recorded and carefully identified by consulting the available literatures (Hooker, 1872-1897; Pandey, 1989; Ghate, 1998; Sharma and Joshi, 2010) and preserved at Department of Botany, Hindu

College, Moradabad. A list of plant species is alphabetically prepared along with their botanical name, local name, family and uses.

3. Results and Discussion

The present study documented 53 plant species from 33 families which are associated with the socio-cultural and religious beliefs among the rural people of the study area. These plant species are used regularly by them in various socio-cultural and religious activities. The plant species of the present study are arranged in alphabetically with their Botanical name, family, and uses in Table-1. Total 53 species (41 dicot and 12 monocot) belong to 50 genera and 33 families (Fig-2). Poaceae family is dominating with 6 species followed by Papilionaceae with 5 and Euphorbiaceae, Moraceae and Lamiaceae with 3 species each (Fig-3). Data clearly indicate that whole plant (24%) is used maximum followed by flowers (20%), leaves (16%) and seeds (11%). Other parts are used less than 10% (Fig-4). Rural people treat these plants like socio-religious entity and worship them (Table-1). It is hoped that the present study may be useful to mankind. It will inspire to conserve these plant species wherever possible.

4. Acknowledgment

The authors are thankful to villagers and religious headmen who are involved in this work for their kind assistance and useful information. First author (SPS) is also thankful to UGC, New Delhi for providing financial assistance.

Table 1. List of Socio religious angiosperms of J. P. Nagar Dist. (U.P.)

S. No.	Species Name	Common Name	Family	Religious uses description
1.	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> L.	Ratti	Papilionaceae	Fruits are used to form Baraina (just like a jeneu) which worn by Bridegroom at the time of marriage ceremony.
2.	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> L. Corrêa	Bel	Rutaceae	Leaves are dedicated to Lord Shiva on the occasion of Mahashivaratri and other religious occasion.
3.	<i>Breonia chinensis</i> (Lam.) Cauron	Kadamb	Rubiaceae	The plant is treated as pious and divine because Lord Krishna played their flute under this tree.
4.	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A. Juss.	Neem	Meliaceae	Leaves are hanged on the door of concerning family after returning the cremation to avoid the bad effect of soul and to prevent chicken pox disease.
5.	<i>Bambusa vulgaris</i> Schrad.	Bans	Poaceae	Stem is buried under the ground of Mandap where marriage ceremony is organized.
6.	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.) Taub.	Palash	Papilionaceae	Branches and leaves are used in the occasion of marriage ceremonies to cover the marriage Mandap. It is worshiped by ladies on the occasion of Akshay Tritiya.
7.	<i>Brassica rapa</i> L.	Sarson	Brassicaceae	Seeds mixed with salt and red chilies are used to remove the bad effect of an evil eye.
8.	<i>Calotropis procera</i> (Aiton) Dryand.	Akaua	Asclepiadaceae	Flowers are dedicated to Lord Shiva on the occasion of Mahashivaratri and nagnanchami.
9.	<i>Canna indica</i> L.	Keli	Cannaceae	Flowers of this plant regarded as flower of heaven and offered Goddess for long life.
10.	<i>Catharanthus roseus</i> (L.) G. Don	Sadabahar	Apocynaceae	Flowers offered to please Goddess Parvati.
11.	<i>Cannabis sativa</i> L.	Bhang	Cannabinaceae	Bhang is obtained from drying the young leaves and dried flowering tops of female plants. Both are offered to please Lord Shiva.
12.	<i>Capsicum annuum</i> L.	Mirchi	Solanaceae	Chilies along with lemons are hanged by businessman on their door to save from the effect of bad evils eye.
13.	<i>Cicer arietinum</i> L.	Chana	Papilionaceae	Pulse of gram is offered to God Hanuman at the time of Jethsudi Purnima.
14.	<i>Citrus limon</i> (L.) Osbeck	Nimbu	Rutaceae	Fruits are offered to please Goddess Durga at the time of Navdurga pooja.
15.	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> L.	Aparajita	Papilionaceae	It is considered as sacred plant and planted by people in their houses.
16.	<i>Curcuma longa</i> L.	Haldi	Zingiberaceae	Turmeric powder mixed with rice used to put mark on the forehead at the time of many social and religious occasions to show respect.
17.	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.) Pers.	Doob	Poaceae	It is used on the occasion of holy functions, festivals and marriages etc. Plant is also used at the time of child birth to convey the message to the parent of married woman.
18.	<i>Datura metel</i> L.	Dhatura	Solanaceae	Flowers and fruits are offered to please Lord Shiva.

19.	1. <i>Epipremnumaureum</i> (Linden & André) G.S.Bunting	Money plant	Araceae	People believe that money plant brings prosperity and happiness in the life. So, people planted it in their houses.
20.	<i>Syzygiumcumini</i> (L.) Skeels.	Jamun	Myrtaceae	Branches and leaves of this plant are used on the occasion of marriage ceremonies to cover the marriage Mandap.
21.	<i>Euphorbia nerifolia</i> L.	Snuhi	Euphorbiaceae	This plant is regarded as plants of Lord Shiva and flowers of Snuhi associated with snake worship.
22.	<i>Ficusreligiosa</i> L.	Peepal	Moraceae	People believe that God and Goddess live in the root, stem and leaves of this tree. So, it is worshipped by Hindu families.
23.	<i>Ficusbenghalensis</i> L.	Bargad	Moraceae	It is considered as sacred and divine plant. Hindu Ladies worship it for the long life of their husband.
24.	<i>Ficusvirens</i> Aiton	Pakhar	Moraceae	It is a holy and divine plant. It is worshipped by Hindu families in many occasions.
25.	<i>Hibiscus rosasinensis</i> L.	Gurhal	Malvaceae	Flowers are used for offering to Goddess Laxmi for prosperity in home.
26.	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i> L.	Jawar	Poaceae	It is the most important part of havansamagri. It is also used to produce the green small shoot of plants of barley known as Jaware at the time Nardurga pooja.
27.	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i> (L.) Lam.	Sakarkand	Convovulaceae	Boiled tuberous roots of this plant are eaten on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi.
28.	<i>Jasminum sambac</i> (L.) Aiton	Bela, Mogra	Oleaceae	Flowers are used in many religious occasions as offerings to Gods. Garlands are adorned by women during special occasions.
29.	<i>Lawsoniainermis</i> L.	Mehdi	Lythraceae	The paste of leaves of this plant is used as myrtle (mehndi) by ladies on the occasion of Marriage and other occasion.
30.	<i>Leucas aspera</i> (Willd.) Link	Gubba	Lamiaceae	Flowers are offered to please the Lord Shiva.
31.	<i>Mangiferaindica</i> L.	Aam	Anacardiaceae	The leaves of mango tied in a string are hanged on the door at the time of child birth, marriage ceremony and other holy functions.
32.	<i>Madhucaalangifolia</i> var. <i>latifolia</i> (Roxb.) A.Chev.	Mahua	Sapotaceae	Flowers are offered to worship the Harchhath. Delicate stem used as tooth brush by ladies at the time of Harchhath.
33.	2. <i>Mitragynaparvifolia</i> (Roxb.) Korth.	Kaima	Rubiaceae	People believe that dying man gets heaven if wood of this tree is used in cremation. So people used its wood in cremation.
34.	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> L.	Kela	Musaceae	Partially opened inflorescence is used marriage Mandap. Leaves and fruits are used on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi.
35.	<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Geartn.	Kamal	Nymphaeaceae	It is believed that Goddess Laxmi resides in the flower so, it is offered to her. Leaves of this plant are used as plate on which food is served at the time of various social and religious occasions.
36.	<i>Nyctanthesarbor-tristis</i> L.	Harsringar	Nyctaginaceae	It is considered as a symbol of happiness and prosperity. So, People planted it in their houses.
37.	<i>Ocimumbasilicum</i> L.	Tulsi	Lamiaceae	Some people make a cluster of twigs known as Chhauhar and go door to door of villagers along with Chhauhar on the occasion of Deepawali.
38.	<i>Ocimumtenerriflorum</i> L.	Tulsi	Lamiaceae	It is worshiped and cultivated in the Hindus homes. People believe that if Tulsi is kept on the head of dying man he gets heaven. The twig of leaves is used in holy water during worship.
39.	<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.	Dhan, Rice	Poaceae	Rice is used to put mark on the forehead along with haldi and roli at many social and religious occasions.
40.	<i>Phoenix sylvestris</i> (L.) Roxb.	Khajur	Arecaceae	Leaves are used to form diadem (Maur) worn by Bride and Bridegroom during marriage ceremony.
41.	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> L.	Amla	Euphorbiaceae	Hindus take their foods under this tree on the occasion of IchchhaNavmi in the month of Kartik.
42.	<i>Plumeria rubra</i> L.	Champa	Apocynaceae	Flowers are offered at the temples at mid-night on a full moon night to get wealth.
43.	<i>Polyalthialongifolia</i> (Sonn.) Thwaites.	Ashok	Annonaceae	Ashok considered as a sacred plant and people planted it in their houses because it is said that Sita took shelter under this plant. It is not real Ashok but people call Ashok due to its resemblance with real Ashok.
44.	<i>Prosopis cineraria</i> (L.) Druce	Sami	Mimosaceae	Wood is used as sacred fuel fit for Agni Devta, producing fire in all religious rites.
45.	<i>Putranjivaroxburghii</i> Wall.	Putranjiva	Euphorbiaceae	The childless couples impressed their finger prints on main trunk of this tree for getting child.
46.	<i>Saccharumspontaneum</i> L.	Kans, Kansa	Poaceae	This plant is worshipped on the occasion of Harchhath.
47.	<i>Saracaindica</i> L.	Sita Ashok	Caesalpiniaceae	Tree is worshiped as sacred tree for love and peace in Hindu families.
48.	<i>Sesamumindicum</i> L.	Til	Pedaliaceae	Til mixed with water and used for bathing at the time of Makar-Sankranti, It is also considered as part of havansamagri in many social and religious occasion
49.	3. <i>Tabernaemontana divaricata</i> (L.) R.Br. ex Roem. &Schult.	Chandni	Apocynaceae	Flowers are used in offering God and Goddess.
50.	4. <i>Tamarixericoides</i> Rottler&Willd.	Jhau	Tamaricaceae	Stem is kept under the pillow by the people to save from horrible dreams.
51.	<i>Trapanatansvar. bispinosa</i> (Roxb.) Makino	Singhara	Trapaceae	Fruits powder is used as food at the time of fasting in many festivals.
52.	<i>Triticumaestivum</i> L.	Gehun	Poaceae	Grains husk of wheat mixed with salt and mustard grains and used to save bridegroom from bad influence of evil eye.
53.	5. <i>Vigna mungo</i> (L.) Hepper	Urd	Papilionaceae	Seeds are offered to Holi to save from skin diseases.

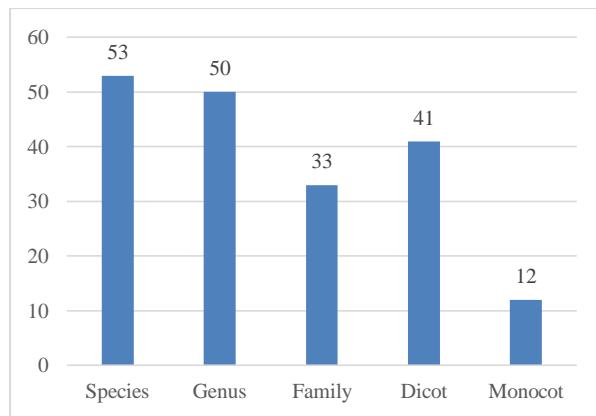


Fig2:Details of Species Richness genus and families of J. P. Nagar dist.

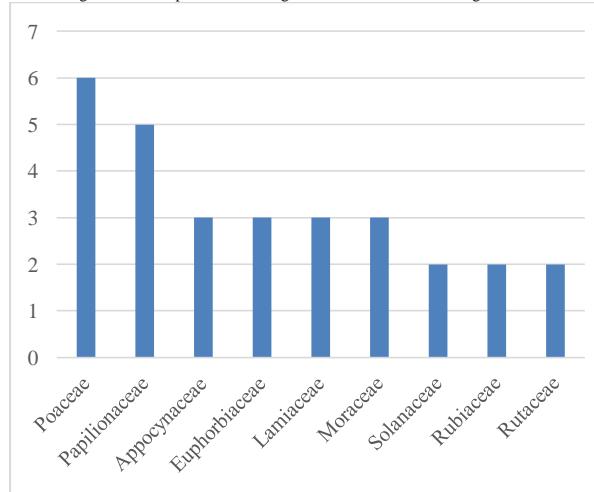


Fig 3: Details of Dominant families.

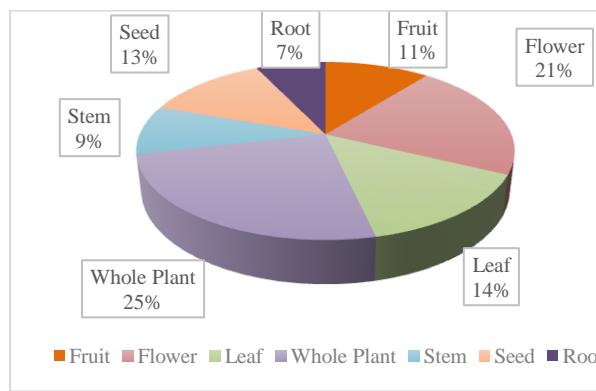


Fig4: Various Parts Used for Social and Religious Customs by Rural People of J. P. Nagar dist.

References

- [1]. Ahirwar JR, Socio-Religious Importance of Plants in Bundelkhand Region of India. Res. J. Recent Sci., 2: 1-4, (2013)
- [2]. Anthwal A, Sharma RC, Shrma A and Groves S, Traditional Way of Conserving Plant Diversity in Garhwal Himalaya, Uttarakanchal. The Journal of American Science, 2(1): 35-38, (2006).
- [3]. Dashora K, Bharadwaj M and Gupta A, Conservation ethics of plants in India. The Indian Forester, 136(6):837-842, (2010).
- [4]. Gogoi P and Borthakur SK, Plants in religio-cultural beliefs of Tai-Khamtis of Assam (India). Ethnobot., 3: 89-95, (1991).
- [5]. Kumar B, Major Religious Plants of Rudraprayag District (Garhwal), Uttarakhand (India). Ethnobotanical Leaflets, 13: 1476-1484, (2009).
- [6]. Ghate VS, Plants in Patra Pooja, notes on their identity and utilization. Ethnobot., 10:6-15, (1998).
- [7]. Hooker JD, The Flora of British India, L. Reeve & Co., Vol. 1-7, London. (1872-1897).
- [8]. Humeera A, Goni R, Mushtaq R and Magotra R, Ethno-religious significance of sacred plants of District Kishtwar (J&K), Asian Journal of Pharmaceutical Technology & Innovation. 2 (7): 6-12, (2014).
- [9]. Pandey BP, Sacred Plants of India, Plants for Human Kind. Shree publications, New Delhi, (1989).
- [10]. Singh H, Husain T, Agnihotri P, Pande PC and Iqbal M, Biodiversity conservation through traditional beliefs system: a case study from Kumaon Himalayas, India. Int. J. Conserv. Sci., 3(1): 33-40, (2012).
- [11]. Sharma V and Joshi BD, Role of Sacred Plants in Religion and Health-care system of local people of Almora district of Uttarakhand State (India). Academic Arena, 2(6),(2010).